

EDUCAÇÃO E DESENVOLVIMENTO SOCIAL
EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
EDUCACIÓN Y DESAROLLO SOCIAL

millenium 

Millenium, 2(6), 59-68.

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INFLUÊNCIA DA EXPECTATIVA DE FUTURO SOBRE A QUALIDADE DE VIDA DE CADETES DO EXÉRCITO PORTUGUES

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FUTURE EXPECTATION ON QUALITY OF LIFE OF CADETS OF PORTUGUESE ARMY

INFLUENCIA DE LAS EXPECTATIVAS FUTURAS EN LA CALIDAD DE CADETS VIDA DEL EJÉRCITO PORTUGUÉS

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RECEIVED: 09th April, 2018

ACCEPTED: 11th May, 2018

RESUMO

Introdução: A qualidade de vida no trabalho tem sido um tema recorrente na literatura, tendo em vista seu papel de agente motivador para os trabalhadores e promotor de vantagem competitiva para organização.

Objetivos: Este estudo pretende avaliar se a expectativa que o cadete da Academia Militar Portuguesa tem sobre o seu futuro influencia a sua saúde e qualidade de vida, em particular a satisfação profissional, a satisfação com a vida e o síndrome de *burnout* e o *stress* percebido.

Método: Participaram do estudo 424 cadetes da Academia Militar Portuguesa, todos do sexo masculino, sendo 99 (23,3%) do primeiro ano, 105 (24,8%) do segundo ano, 109 (25,7%) do terceiro ano e 111 (26,2%) do quarto ano. Os participantes preencheram as escalas utilizadas para mensuração das variáveis do estudo de forma presencial, coletiva e voluntária. Foram respeitados todos os preceitos éticos para a realização da pesquisa.

Resultados: A utilização da técnica de modelagem de equações estruturais revelou que a expectativa futura de sucesso profissional e financeiro tem uma influência positiva e significativa sobre a satisfação com a vida e com o trabalho e uma influência negativa significativa sobre o *stress* percebido e a síndrome de *burnout*.

Conclusão: A expectativa de futuro pode ser considerada como uma variável relevante para explicar a qualidade de vida de cadetes portugueses, ao menos no que se refere aos indicadores satisfação com a vida, satisfação com o trabalho, *stress* percebido e síndrome de *burnout*.

Palavras-chave: Expectativa de futuro; Qualidade de vida; Trabalho e satisfação com a vida; Síndrome *burnout*; *Stress* percebido.

ABSTRACT

Introduction: The quality of life at work has been a recurring theme in the literature, considering its role as motivating agent for workers and promoter of competitive advantage for organization.

Objectives: This study intends to evaluate if the expectation that the cadet of the Portuguese Military Academy has on his future influences his health and quality of life, in particular the professional satisfaction, the satisfaction with life and the burnout syndrome and the perceived stress.

Method: 424 cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy, all males, 99 (23.3%) from the first year, 105 (24.8%) from the second year, 109 (25.7%) from the third year and 111 (26.2%) of the fourth year. Participants completed the scales used to measure the variables of the study in person, in a collective and voluntary way. All ethical precepts for carrying out the research were respected.

Results: The use of the modeling technique of structural equations revealed that the future expectation of professional and financial success has a positive and significant influence on the life and jobsatisfaction and a significant negative influence on the perceived stress and the burnout syndrome.

Conclusion: The expectation of the future can be considered as a relevant variable to explain the quality of life of Portuguese citizens, at least with regard to indicators of satisfaction with life, satisfaction with work, perceived stress and burnout syndrome.

Key words: Future expectation; Quality of life; Work and satisfaction with life; Burnout syndrome; Perceived stress.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La calidad de vida en el trabajo ha sido un tema recurrente en la literatura, teniendo en cuenta su papel de agente motivador para los trabajadores y promotor de ventaja competitiva para la organización.

Objetivos: Este estudio tiene como objetivo evaluar la expectativa de que el cadete de la Academia Militar portugués ha sobre su futuro influye en su salud y calidad de vida, sobre todo la satisfacción en el trabajo, la satisfacción con la vida y el síndrome de burnout y estrés percibido.

Método: El estudio incluyó 424 cadetes de la Academia de Militar, todos hombres, 99 (23,3%) del primero año, 105 (24,8%) del segundo año, 109 (25,7%) de la tercera años y 111 (26,2%) del cuarto año. Los participantes de llenar las escalas utilizadas para medir las variables del estudio de forma presencial, colectiva y voluntaria. Se respetaron todos los preceptos éticos para la realización de la investigación.

Resultados: La utilización de la técnica de modelo de ecuaciones estructurales reveló que la expectativa futura de éxito profesional y financiero tiene una influencia positiva y significativa sobre la satisfacción con la vida y con el trabajo y una influencia negativa significativa sobre el estrés percibido y el síndrome de agotamiento.

Conclusión: La expectativa de futuro puede ser considerada como una variable relevante para explicar la calidad de vida del cadete portugués, al menos en lo que se refiere a la satisfacción de los indicadores de vida, satisfacción en el trabajo, el estrés percibido y el síndrome de agotamiento.

Palabras clave: Expectativa de futuro; Calidad de vida; Satisfacción con lo trabajo; Satisfacción con la vida; Síndrome de agotamiento, Estrés percibido.

INTRODUCTION

This study is part of a more comprehensive study that encompasses the Brazilian Military Academy of Agulhas Negras and aims to investigate factors associated with adaptation to higher military education. Organizations have sought to know and investigate human behavior at work in order to predict or intervene, increasing quality of life and productivity at work. Many of these investigations have shown that contemporary problems related to the profession impact the conduct of the worker within and even outside the organization (Carlson, Grzywacz, & Zivnuska, 2009; Limongi-França, 2008; Lazarus & Folkman, 1989).

In the context of the Portuguese cadets, it is considered that the cadets' expectation of their future influences how they deal with their academic activities and with the military career in general.

In military institutions, professionals often expose themselves to physical and mental risks to carry out their work. These risks can impact health and affect the quality of life. The Military Academy is a public military higher education institution that develops teaching, research and community support activities with the objective of training officers assigned to the permanent staff of the Army and Republican National Guard. The period of formation of the cadet is four years, being after this period formed like official. During this period of time, students are constantly evaluated for their performance under adverse conditions, by performing topographic tests, shooting, tactical exercises and patrols.

The cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy are inserted in a challenging and very exhausting routine, which requires great physical and psychological preparation. Therefore they need to enjoy good health, to act properly within their society. According to the Portuguese Military Academy, the cadet is required: intelligence, will, effort, physical and moral courage, time, discipline, conscious subordination, preparation, sacrifice and often life itself.

In the context of the Portuguese Military Academy, to be Official is to have total availability to serve the Nation. It is to have adequate, gradual and continuous training, so that in addition to the technical-scientific preparation it must have the capacity to establish and maintain communication with others, to work in groups, to take responsibilities, to take initiative, to make decisions and assumptions of risks, professional spirit, ethical sense of competition and service to the community.

1. FUTURE EXPECTATIONS

Studies about future expectations are scarce, in civil or military contexts. They are especially rare military organizations, it's considered that future expectation becomes relevant to the understanding of important phenomena related to military training. Future expectations have been considered, directly or indirectly, in several studies. It has been used to explain performance of people, especially in the school environments. Future expectations can be considered a basic belief about the future, this belief can stimulate some behaviors and inhibit others (Verdugo, Freire & Sánchez-Sandoval, 2018).

This variable has been studied mainly in young audiences, who are in the phase of deciding the future of their lives (Aguar & Conceição, 2009; Oliveira & Saldanha, 2010). However, such expectations may accompany individuals throughout their lives, regardless of age.

Some studies have shown that future expectations can function as a resilience factor, giving conditions to individuals to face adverse situations more appropriately, if they believe, for example, that difficulties are momentary and that the future reserves better moments (Souza, Pereira, Funck & Formiga 2013; Nelson, Buisine & Aoussat, 2013).

Particularly in the context of military organizations, it is considered that future expectations become relevant to the understanding of important phenomena related to military training. Functioning as a resilience factor, then, the expectation of the future would be positively related to health and quality of life.

According to Seginer (2009) expectations regarding the future consist of plans, aspirations and fears regarding several domains of life in the near or distant future. For Souza, Pereira, Funck and Formiga (2013) the perception of the future influences decisions and behaviors in the present. Thus, the greater the knowledge (or belief) of the future the greater the chance to make better decisions in the present. In this same direction, Oliveira and Saldanha (2010) understand the future expectancy as the way individuals perceive their future and the goals of life they propose to achieve, or as a planning-oriented construct or hope to achieve something. The expectation of future has several aspects that need to be considered, among them are professional and financial success and personal and family satisfaction.

Three main aspects of the future expectations were initially considered: the professional and financial success, the conditions of the society in which the individual is inserted and the personal realization in general. However, the achievement dimension was

disregarded for a better adaptation of the study carried out in Portugal, and the dimension referring to the conditions in the society were not relevant, since no significant influence was observed to explain the study variables.

Locatelli, Bzuneck and Guimarães (2007) consider the expectation of the future as the anticipation, in the present, of future goals. This expectation thus refers to the degree and manner in which the chronological future of an individual is integrated into the present by means of motivational processes, whether these goals are relatively close or more distant. So we assume that future expectation is an individual's belief about how their future will be, regardless of whether their actions are being developed or not aimed at achieving that future.

2. HEALTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines quality of life as "the individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value system in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards and concerns" (The World Health Organization Quality of Life Assessment Group, 1995). WHO also defines that health is not just an absence of disease but a condition of perfect physical, mental and social well-being. However, this definition, as well as being based on subjective and unattainable expressions such as "perfection" and "well-being", is outdated.

Ferrans (1990) employs five broad components to define quality of life: (1) to have a normal life, which is the ability to live on a level similar to that of other healthy people or typical people of the same age; (2) happiness / satisfaction, which is the result of judgments about living conditions and focuses satisfaction on several important areas in the life of the individual; (3) achievement of personal goals, (4) social utility and (5) natural ability. It should be noted that these categories illustrate some of the most common ways in which quality of life has been defined but do not exhaust these categories.

Ferrans (1989) adopts an individualistic perspective, which considers that the quality of life depends on the experience of life that is unique for each person. Individuals are the only ones who can adequately judge their quality of life, as this would depend on an individual perspective.

Quality of life is an extremely important concept for health care that has been developed predominantly over the past three decades. However, because it is a complex concept, there is still no universally accepted definition of quality of life. The health and quality of life of the Portuguese cadets were measured in the present study through indicators of job satisfaction, life satisfaction, burnout syndrome, and perceived stress.

3. JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction has been the subject of many studies, which associate it with other important variables within the scope of organizational research. Definitions of job satisfaction can be categorized in two approaches: one-dimensional and multidimensional or multifactorial (Tamayo, 2000). In the present study we used an one-dimensional approach, where job satisfaction was considered as a global attitude or an emotional or affective state in relation to work.

Job satisfaction is conceptualized as the worker's affective relationship with the work he or she develops. It is the result of the association the worker establishes between the work and its own values. According to Campos, Domingues, Rodrigues and Oliveira (2012), the satisfaction that people feel in their jobs is largely a consequence of the extent to which various aspects of their work conditions tend to be relevant to their value systems.

According to Wong, Abdull Rahman, and Choi (2014) job satisfaction is characterized by the general attitude of the individual about his work, which is the difference between the amount of rewards he actually receives and the amount of rewards he believes he should receive. Job satisfaction has been extensively investigated for its impact on behaviors within an organization, such as productivity and quality of life.

In fact, according to Hauret and Williams (2017) job satisfaction is a variable capable of exerting a strong influence within the organizational contexts. It has been associated with psychic health, quality of life and interpersonal relationships of the workers, with consequences for individuals and the organizations.

4. LIFE SATISFACTION

According to Joia, Ruiz, and Dinalisio (2007), life satisfaction is a cognitive judgment of some specific spheres of life such as health, work, living conditions, social relations, autonomy, among others. In such a way, satisfaction with life would be a process of judgment and general evaluation of one's own life according to one's own criterion. Reflecting in part on the subjective well-being of each person, that is, the way and the reasons that lead people to live their life experiences in a positive way.

Cheung and Lucas (2014), sustain that satisfaction with life is a cognitive judgment of some specific aspect of a person's life; a process of judgment and general evaluation of life itself; an assessment of life according to a criterion. The satisfaction judgment depends on comparisons between life circumstances and the standards individuals adopt for comparison (Atienza, Balaguer, Corte-Real & Fonseca, 2016).

5. BURNOUT SYNDROME

Theoretical models and instruments capable of evaluate and explain burnout, a syndrome characterized by chronic feelings of discouragement, apathy and depersonalization began to be developed only recently in the 1970s. According to Maslach and Jackson (1985), burnout is generally identified as a form of stress at work, and may occur from direct and excessive contact with other humans, especially among individuals involved in any highly emotional relationship. Burnout syndrome can be divided into three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduction of personal fulfillment.

Emotional exhaustion refers to a depletion of one's own emotional resources and a sense of lack of energy. The depersonalization can be characterized by the development of a negative and apathetic attitude towards the people with whom it serves. The third aspect of burnout syndrome involves a negative evaluation of one's own personal accomplishments in working with people. Employees feel unhappy with themselves and dissatisfied with their accomplishments at work. Menezes et al (2017).

Bridgeman, Bridgeman and Barone (2018) defines burnout as an individual's response to a prolonged state of stress. In such a context, the methods of coping have failed or were insufficient to deal with the problem. The syndrome tends to reach professionals whose activity involves serving or helping others. There is evidence that professionals in care areas have presented burnout syndrome more frequently.

6. PERCEIVED STRESS

One of the ways of assessing stress is through the individual's perception of stressors that are around them. For an event to be considered by the subject as a stressor, two processes must occur: cognitive evaluation, which is the judgment of a situation as a stressor or not, and coping strategies that are the forms of coping that the individual finds to face the events perceived as stressors.

Stress arises when individuals realize that they cannot deal adequately with the demands or threats. Nowadays, stress is conceived as a possible way of explaining the interface between psychological, social and biological dynamics. It is an important subject of study of the social psychology of health in the search for an understanding factor that affects health-disease processes (Taylor, 2010).

Conceptually, stress is a psychosocial phenomenon with a biological repercussion that occurs according to the perception of real or imagined threat interpreted as capable of causing harm to the psychological or physical integrity of an individual (Santos, 2010).

There are references that point to the influence of stress on the development or aggravation of several physical or mental illness situations (Machado, Damásio, Borsa, & Silva, 2014). This fact emphasizes the need for knowledge about health and quality of life in work environments, especially in the military contexts. The objective of present study is to provide a new perspective of reflection for the promotion of health and quality of life in military contexts, considering the role played by the expectation of future in the explanation of job satisfaction, life satisfaction, perceived stress and burnout syndrome.

7. METHODS

7.1. Sample

A total of 424 cadets of the Military Academy of Portugal, belonging to the four years of training, participated in the study, 99 (23.3%) from the first year, 105 (24.8%) from the second year, 109 (25.7%) from the third year and 111 (26.2%) of the fourth year. The age ranged from 19 to 25 years.

7.2. Data collection instruments and procedures

Participants completed a digital questionnaire containing the study instruments.

The Future Expectation Scale is composed of 18 items distributed in 3 factors: Professional and Financial Success; Conditions of the Company and Personal Realization.

To measure job satisfaction, the scale developed by Judge and Klinger (2008) was employed. In such instrument, job satisfaction is measured as a unique factor with 5 items in Likert format, ranging from 1 to 5. The exploratory factorial analysis revealed the existence of satisfactory psychometric characteristics for use of the instrument in studies with Brazilian samples (KMO of 0.74, significant Bartlett sphericity test at the 0.001 level, 54.30% explanation of observed variance, and Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.78).

Satisfaction with life was measured using the Life Satisfaction Scale (Diener et al., 1985). The procedures of confirmatory factorial analysis performed by the authors confirmed the structure obtained in the original instrument.

The Perceived Stress Scale was developed and validated for Brazilian samples by Reis, Hino and Añez (2010). The instrument has been used both as uni and bifactorial measures. Considering the specificity of the participants of the present study, a confirmatory factorial analysis was performed, replicating the structure obtained.

The Maslach Burnout Inventory for Students (MBI-SS, Schaufeli et al., 2002), was employed as an measurement of Burnout syndrome. The instrument consists of 15 questions that are subdivided into three subscales: Emotional Exhaustion (5 items); Depersonalization (4 items) and Professional Realization (6 items).

The instruments were offered to the cadets for online filling, and access was possible during a 2-week period. Full confidentiality was guaranteed regarding the identification of participants. The participation was voluntary and the study was approved in its ethical aspects by the Military Academy.

7.3. Statiscal analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) 19 and the Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS) 19 software. The SPSS is usefull for general analysis and AMOS for Modelling of Structural Equation and Confirmatory Factorial Analysis.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Initially a confirmatory factorial analysis was performed for the future expectation scale, with values recommended by the literature in the main indexes of adjustment (X^2 , X^2/df , RMR, GFI, AGFI, CFI and RMSEA). After this, a descriptive analysis was performed. Table 1 presents descriptive information for the scales. Participants completed the scales at Likert format of 5 points, in ascending order. That is, higher scores indicate higher levels of each measure.

Table 1 - Average, median and standard deviation of the participants in the study variables

Study variables	Average	Median	Standard Deviation
Professional Success and Financial expectation	4.08	4.00	0.53
Expectations About Conditions of Society	3.03	3.00	0.75
Emotional exhaustion	2.67	2.60	0.74
Depersonalization	2.06	2.00	0.83
Lack of Professional Accomplishment	2.38	2.33	0.53
Perceived stress	2.69	2.67	0.71
Life Satisfaction	3.60	3.60	0.69
Job Satisfaction	3.79	3.80	0.56

The average for expectations regarding professional and financial success was 4.08, showing a high incidence of the perception of this variable by the group.

The average for expectation about the conditions of society was 3.03, the average for life satisfaction and job satisfaction were respectively 3.60 and 3.79. These results indicate a predominance of intermediate answers provided by cadets.

The averages for burnout syndrome were relatively low: emotional exhaustion ($M = 2.67$), depersonalization ($M = 2.06$); and lack of professional achievement ($M = 2.38$). In this same direction, the average for stress was 2.69. These results indicate low incidence of these variables among the target audience.

The analysis of structural equations showed that the hypothesized model was partially confirmed (Figure 1), since it was observed, in fact, a significant impact of the expected professional and financial success of the study variables, such positive impact in relation to satisfaction life and job satisfaction and negative in relation to burnout syndrome and perceived stress. However, the expectations dimension on the conditions of the society was removed from the study since it did not contribute significantly to explain changes in the study variables.

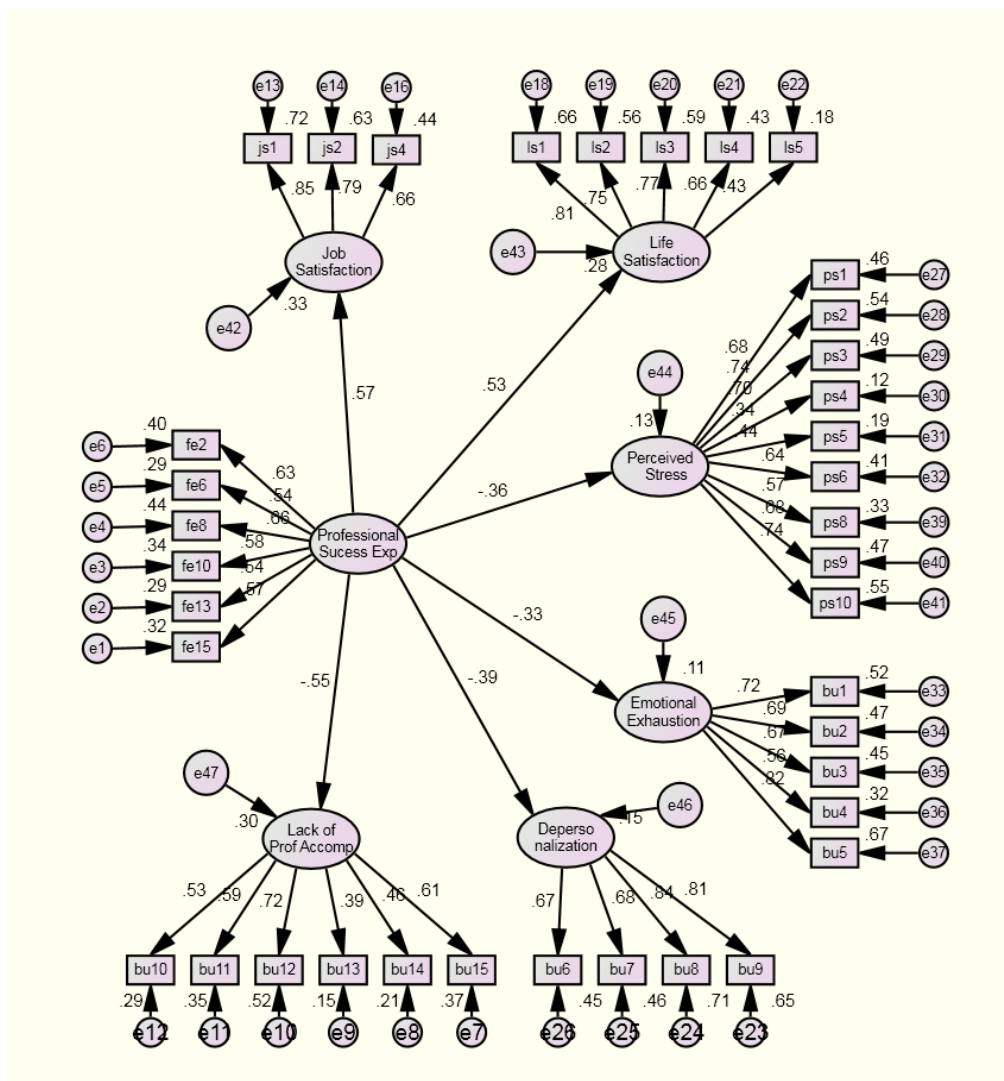


Figure 1 - Analysis of structural equation model in the study hypothesized

Table 2 lists the major indices used to evaluate the adequacy of the model, as indicated in the literature. Such indices are χ^2/df , the AGFI, GFI, CFI and RMSEA (Maroco, 2010).

The ratio of χ^2 (Chi-square) by the degree of freedom evaluates poverty adjustment. Thus, the lower the value the better for the study. In general, the ideal model has a value of 1, and an acceptable amount of up to 5. Values greater than 5 indicate a very impoverished model, which should not be accepted.

Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) and Adjusted Goodness-of-Fit Index (AGFI) R^2 are analogous to multiple regression. Therefore, indicate the proportion of variance-covariance in the data explained by the model. These range from 0 to 1, with values around 0.80 and 0.90, or greater, indicating a satisfactory fit of the model.

The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) compares, in general, the estimated model and the null model, considering values closer to 1 as ideal. However, values up to 0.9 are considered satisfactory. The Root-Mean-Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), with its 90% confidence interval (90% CI), is considered an indicator of poor adjustment, ie, high values indicate an unadjusted model. It is assumed as an ideal that the RMSEA is between 0.05 and 0.08, accepting values up to 0.10.

In Table 2 it is possible to check measures of adjustments (Godness of Fit Index) and estimated parameters of the variable marker used model to verify their suitability to the data.

Table 2 - Major indexes for model evaluation

Parameters	Value Obtained	Ideal Value
χ^2 / gl	1.95	up to 5
GFI	0.87	Above 0.80
AGFI	0.85	Above 0.80
CFI	0.90	Next 1
RMSEA	0.05 (0.03-0.07)	Less than 0.10

The following indicators were used: χ^2 / df , the AGFI, GFI, CFI and RMSEA. The model adjustment measures allow checking extension suitability of theory setting the covariance structure of the data. Accordingly, the adjustment measures GFI (0.87) and CFI (0.90) were between 0 and 1, as recommended by Coelho, Vasconcelos-Fernandes, and Raposo (2007). The other adjustment indicators also suggest a good fit of the model: χ^2/df (1.95) below 5 and RMSEA (0.05) smaller than 0.10. We found that the model obtained a good fit, according to the adjustment ratios.

Table 3 shows the impact of expected future on life satisfaction, job satisfaction, burnout syndrome and perceived stress. It is noticed by analyzing the data, there is a significant negative impact of future expectations about emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and perceived stress. That is, the greater the expectation of success, the less emotional exhaustion, depersonalization less works and lowers the perception of stress.

Table 3 - Indicative of the impact of expected future on life satisfaction, job satisfaction, burnout syndrome and perceived stress

Analyzed Influence		Estimate
Expectancy in Success	Emotional exhaustion	- 0.29 **
	depersonalization	- 0.34 **
	Lack of Professional Accomplishment	- 0.51 **
	Perceived stress	- 0.31 **
	Satisfaction with Life	0.45 **
	Job satisfaction	0.49 **

** - significant at 0.01.

On the other hand, we found the significant positive impact of expected future on the other variables. Thus, the higher the expectation of success, greater job satisfaction and satisfaction with life.

In general, it is possible to affirm that the results of the present study are in agreement with what is recommended in the literature. In fact, the expectation of the future has been demonstrated as an important variable that should be considered in both educational and professional environments, as is the case in the context of the present study.

CONCLUSIONS

The study aimed to investigate the impact of expected future on health and quality of life of cadets of the Portuguese Military Academy. To do so, life satisfaction, job satisfaction, burnout syndrome and perceived stress were investigated.

After analyzing the questionnaire responses, it was realized the negative impact of future expectations about the negative variables (burnout syndrome and perceived stress) and the positive impact of future expectations about the positive variables (job satisfaction and life satisfaction). If the cadet has the perception that their future is satisfactory, it works as a buffer for the current situations, which causes it to better face the difficult and stressful situations. On the other hand, if the cadet has a negative expectation for the future, adverse situations become more negatively perceived. If the cadet does not believe in a good future and only see trouble ahead, whatever happens, it is seen as a very large cost for a very small benefit.

Consequently, when there is an expectation of positive future, negative variables are diminished because it is believed that the difficult moment is temporary and necessary to achieve something better in the future. The expectation of the future, therefore, is linked to the confidence that things are going to happen. People with positive future expectations feel certain tranquility, knowing that ahead have something better to expect from them. The opposite occurs with people with negative expectations as they expect bad events in the future, thus generating stress and burnout syndrome.

Thus, the present results allow the conclusion corroboration of hypothesized model in the study. The expectation of the future can be considered as a relevant variable to explain current behavior and health indicators and quality of life, at least as regards

the Portuguese cadets. Additional studies may consider other variables as well as sociodemographic indicative in order to better understand the relationship between the variables. It is suggested, however, the interpretation of the present data with caution. For studies in the area are scarce and the instrument used to measure future expectations are fairly recent.

The results of the study allow us to conclude that, in fact, there is an anticipatory role of the expectation of future quality of life, at least with regard to the variables considered in the study (job satisfaction, perceived stress and burnout syndrome).

Important questions arise from the results of the study. In professional terms, the possibilities of the career should be transmitted to the cadets, who should have as realizable their aspirations in terms of aspirations to higher positions and to the exercises of specific functions within the Portuguese Army. In the educational context, the possibility of accomplishment in the career is another aspect that deserves attention.

Although the results obtained in the present study are in agreement with the literature, new investigations are suggested, considering other professional and training contexts, as well as the inclusion of other variables, capable of promoting a better understanding of the role played by the expectation of future on important phenomena in people's lives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank to the Portuguese Military Academy and the Brazilian Military Academy of Agulhas Negras.

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